

The New Arabian Library

Overview

The new Arabian Branch Library for the City of Scottsdale is a 20,000 square foot freestanding replacement for the small, shared use facility at the Desert Arroyo Middle School. The \$4.7M facility will house over 120,000 volumes, including a unique popular library and coffee bar. The program includes a children's program room, two multipurpose rooms, computer training center and a dedicated teen area. The building is scheduled to be complete in June 2006.

Site

The property lies northwest of the Desert Canyon Schools—across the access road—along the southeast intersection of North Thompson Peak Parkway and East McDowell Mountain Ranch Road. It is zoned "Open Space" (OS) with the "Environmentally Sensitive Lands" (ESL) overlay. Along the northern edges of the parcel the desert has been virtually undisturbed, providing a wide view corridor across natural open space to the McDowell Mountains as one approaches from the south. The intent of this project is to maintain as much of that open space as possible by planting the building within the landscape and using the building's form as an element of it.

The site will be accessed from the existing loop road used by the Desert Canyon Schools, off of McDowell Mountain Ranch Road. A proposed entry will be provided from McDowell Mountain road, permitting library access without crossing the school bus traffic. The new couplet provided by the aquatics center will provide loop road access to the south.

The existing parking is augmented by an additional 40 spaces flanking a tree lined promenade. Descending with natural grade this path provides opportunities for seating and shade along the route from parking into the building. This will draw pedestrians out of parking and drive aisles and provide a universal accessible route to the building. A drive-up window and book drop will permit library customers to receive library services on the run, and minimize congestion around the building entry.

Building

The building is a remembrance of the desert slot canyons of northern Arizona and monument valley, capturing the powerful and unique experience between the compressive stone walls and the ultimate release to the sky above. Ever-patient threads of water, sculpting and polishing the massive walls, cut these natural sandstone canyons over millennia. Harder stone and slow water sharply defines vertical slivers while softer stone gives way to wider crevasse.

The library echoes this powerful natural sequence. An earthen and stone roof is thrust from the desert floor, taking with it the native grasses, shrub and stone texture. Organized about a central court, the building is entered through a "slot canyon" of steel and glass. Walls of weathered steel plate reflect the terracotta walls of stone as they lean over and fall away from the entry path and open to the sky above. The weathered steel walls of the building support an earthen and stone roof, planted with native vegetation and stone from the site. Two roof gardens will contain desert variety trees and groundcovers, recalling the surface level vegetation as one descends into the canyon.

A continuous thread of water echo's the natural erosion of the canyon wall creating the powerful imagery of the building, and eventually pooling in the lower edge of the courtyard. A singular tree is the focus of the space. This centralized court will be used as a prefunction and program spaces for the library and meeting rooms. Two slender "canyon courts" flank the west and south sides of the building, expanding library lounge spaces to the exterior.

363-PA-04

richärd + bauer architecture llc
arabian public library



DESERT CANYON
ELEM. / MID. SCHOOL

Landscape Key Notes

- 1. EXIST. BUILDING FOOTPRINT
- 2. EXIST. PARKING LOT
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Landscape Legend

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640 N. THOMAS ROAD
PHOENIX, ARIZONA 85018
PHONE: 602.264.9665
FAX: 602.264.8234

DATE: 10/10/2004

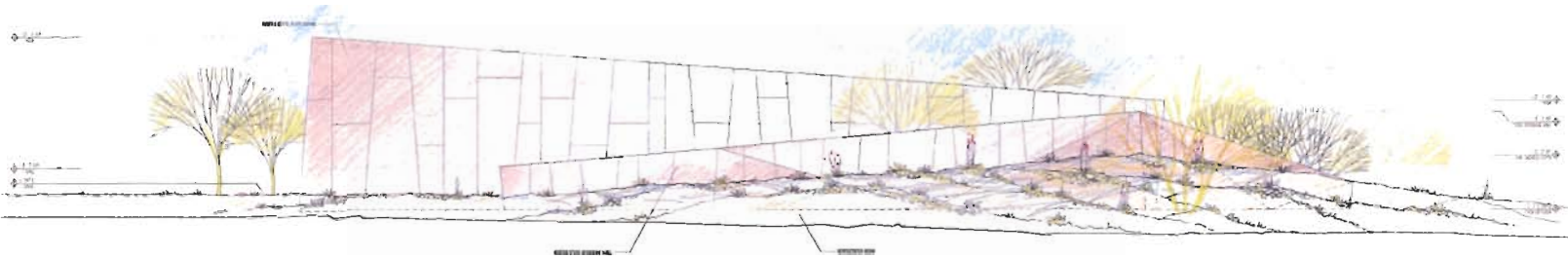
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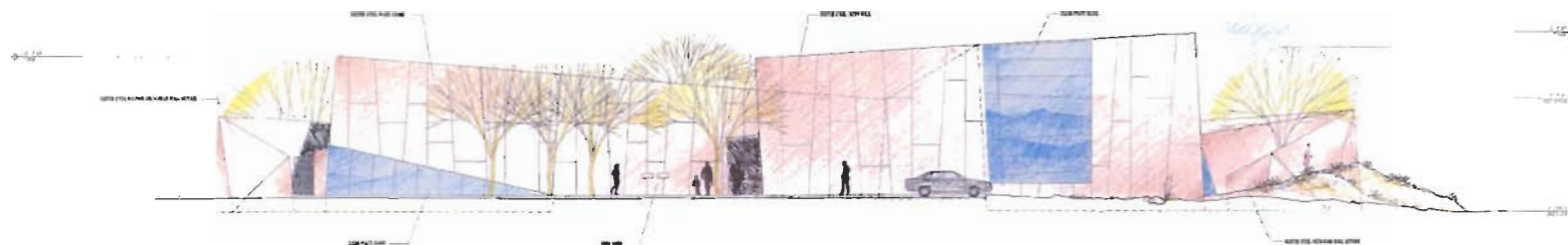
LANDSCAPE PLAN
C110
10/10/2004



850 W. THOMAS ROAD
PHOENIX, ARIZONA 85044
WWW.RB22.COM
TEL: 602.264.1000
FAX: 602.264.1004



2 | northwest elevation



1 | northeast (entry) elevation

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